

157
Not as Pleasing Men, but God.

A
SERMON

Preach'd at the

Cathedral Church of St. PAUL,

Before the Right Honourable the

LORD-MAYOR,

THE

JUDGES and ALDERMEN,

Jan. 29. 17⁰⁹.

By **GEORGE SMALRIDGE, D.D.**

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&c. Octavo.*

THis Court doth desire Dr. *Smalridge*
to Print his Sermon, Preach'd at
the Cathedral Church of *St. Paul*, on
Sunday the Twenty Ninth of *January* last,
before the Lord-Mayor and Aldermen of
this City.

GIBSON.



1 Theff. ii. 4. Latter part of the Verfe.

---Not as *pleasing Men*, but *God*, which
trieth our Hearts.

ST. Paul doth here speak of pleasing Men, and of pleasing God, as things not only different in Speculation, but inconsistent in Fact. When he professeth of himself, that in the Discharge of his Ministry, he did not aim at *pleasing Men, but God, which trieth our Hearts*; he seems to imply, that these are two opposite Ends, and that those who pursue the One, do thereby plainly shew that they have no regard at all to the Other. But in other parts of his Epistles, he speaks as if he was of a quite contrary Opinion: He advises the *Corinthians* against doing any thing that might displease any sort of Men: And that we may not think He exhorted them to what he did not practise himself, He recommends this Advice to them, by the Authority of his own Example, 1 Cor. 10. 32, 33. *Give none Offence, saith he, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the Church of God, even as I please all Men in all things.* What therefore he in this Place declares, must receive some Limitations; and it may be of Use to us, not so much to justify St. Paul's Conduct in this Matter, as to regulate our Own, to know what those Limits are; to enquire into the Measures we ought to prescribe to our selves, in our Study to please Men; to examine, when, and in what Cases an

Endeavour to please Men is Innocent, when Unlawful, when the Duty of a good and sincere Christian. I say, an Endeavour to please; for the Actual Pleasing of Men is not within our Power, nor doth it depend upon our Choice; so that it cannot properly be the Subject of any Command or Prohibition. When *St. Paul* therefore saith, That he did not please Men, but God; this cannot be understood of his Actual Pleasing Men, but of his Aim and Endeavour to please them. Men may be pleas'd with those Actions that are perform'd, without any Design to please them; but this Pleasure cannot be ascrib'd as a Vertue, or imputed as a Fault, to those who intended it not: When therefore we are either commanded or forbidden to please Men, this Precept is of the same Nature, and must admit of the same Interpretation, as that of *St. Paul* to *Timothy*, *Let no Man despise thee*. It was not wholly in *Timothy's* Power, whether he should be despised or not; nor is it in Ours, whether We shall please Men, or not: But as by that Command *Timothy* was enjoyn'd to do such things as might procure Reverence, and to forbear such as might cause Contempt; so, when we are either commanded or forbidden to please Men, we are enjoyn'd or prohibited to do those things which are most likely to please, or to intend the pleasing of Men by our Actions: So that in this Case, we are to measure the Goodness or Evil of our Actions, not by their Actual pleasing, but by our Design and Endeavour to please; and are to shew when, and how far, this Endeavour is Innocent, when it is a Sin, and when it is a Duty.

What is necessary to be said on this Subject,
will,

will, I think, be fairly included under these three Heads.

I. Whatever Men may Innocently be pleas'd with, That we may Innocently do, in order to please Men.

II. What Men ought not to be pleas'd with, That we ought not to do, to please Men thereby.

III. What Men Ought to be pleas'd with, That we are bound to do, that Men may be pleas'd therewith.

I. Whatever Men may Innocently be pleas'd with, that we may Innocently do, in order to please Men.

God hath implanted in our Souls a natural Desire of Pleasure ; which consequently in some Cases we may give way to ; because otherwise this Desire would be implanted in Vain : To be pleas'd therefore, is not always a Sin, but is Good or Evil, according to its different Causes, Occasions, and Circumstances. What things God hath not forbid us to be pleas'd with, in Those we may innocently take pleasure ; and as we may, without Guilt, be pleas'd Ourselves, so may we, with Innocence, contribute to the Warrantable Pleasures of each Other : For what another can innocently be pleas'd with, that I may do without Sin ; since if I could not do it without Sin, neither could he without Guilt be pleas'd in my doing of it, because no one ought to be pleas'd with any Action which is in the least Sinful ; and if an Action be in it self Lawful, it cannot become Otherwise by its pleasing others, unless there were some Law of God
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against doing any thing which might please our Brother. But that a thing pleases, is so far from making what is in it self Innocent to become Sinful, that rather of Indifferent, it makes it a Duty ; for since we are bound to contribute to the Happiness of our Brethren, and so far as we do please them without exposing them to any Mischief, we do make them happy ; to please others, where it can be done without Sin, seems to be an Act of Brotherly Charity. God hath been so indulgent to us, that he hath debarr'd us from no Pleasures, but such as will at last end in Grief and Pain ; and we are so far from being forbidden to promote the Pleasure of others, that we are never restrain'd from pleasing them, but where the Pleasure which we afford them, will at last tend to their Hurt. This Rule will justify us in the Use of all Innocent Methods of pleasing each Other. We may comply with the Warrantable Customs of the Age and Manners of those we live with: We may make our Persons acceptable to those with whom we converse, by Civil and Obliging Conversation: We may divert their Imagination with the Pleasantry of Wit, and Innocent Mirth ; and much more feed their Understandings with delightful Truths : In short, we may minister to any unforbidden Pleasure of each other, without being guilty of so pleasing Men, as to displease God, who trieth our Hearts.

But in the IId Place,

What Men ought not to be pleas'd with, that we ought not to do to please Men.

The Pleasures of Men are to be bounded within certain Limits, beyond which if they pass, they become Unwarrantable. The Will of Man, by the
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the Law of our Creation, ought to be subordinate to the Will of God: Whilst it conforms it self to that Rule, it is Just: When it any way transgresses that, it becomes Unjust. When Man therefore is pleas'd with that which displeases God, this Pleasure is sinful, because Nothing, which is contrary to the Will of God, ought to be the Object of our Pleasure. And as Men ought not to be pleas'd with any thing which is Sinful, so ought they not to do any thing which is Sinful, to please each other: For, what is in it self Unlawful, cannot become Lawful by its pleasing; since the pleasing or displeasing Men is wholly extrinsecal to the Morality of our Actions, any otherwise than as God commands or forbids us to please them: To some Men indeed our Actions will be Pleasing or Displeasing, as they are Good or Bad; but they are Good or Bad, only as they are pleasing or displeasing to God. This Rule will condemn all Endeavour to please Men, by doing any thing which is Evil; Evil to Them or to Us; destructive to Their Salvation, or to our Own.

And 1st, We must not, to please Men, do any thing which is prejudicial to their Salvation. It is the height of Folly, to be pleas'd with what tends to our Ruin, and of Cruelty to please Others, at the Expence of their eternal Happiness. He would do a very inhumane Office to his Friend, who should administer him a deadly Draught, tho' it pleas'd his Palate, and were sweeter than Honey in his Mouth. By this vicious Complaisance, the Serpent first beguil'd *Eve*; and She, being deceiv'd, brought *Adam* into the Transgression: When She had tasted the Forbidden Fruit, and eaten thereof, she was willing, in great Courtesy, to oblige her Lord, by com-

communicating to him, in the same Morsel, Pleasure and Death. Of the same fatal Treachery are all those Instruments of Satan guilty, who instruct raw and unpractis'd Sinners in the ways of Vice; bring them first acquainted with Sin; and take upon them, with the Devil on the Mount, to shew them the World, and the Pleasures of it. These make it their Business to call aside Passengers, who are going on right in the Ways of Vertue, and to lead them officiously into the more pleasant Paths of Vice, *Prov. 9. 16, 17. Who so is simple, they bid him turn aside thither; and as for him that wanteth Understanding, they say unto him, stol'n Waters are sweet, and Bread eaten in secret, is pleasant. Thus, Prov. 7. 21, &c. With much fair Speech they cause him to yield; with the Flattering of their Lips they ensnare him. He goeth after Pleasure strait way, as an Ox goeth to the Slaughter, or as a Fool to the Correction of the Stocks: As a Bird, he hasteth to the Snare, and knoweth not that it is for his Life; 'till at last he finds, by sad Experience, that this pleasant Way leads to Hell, and goes down to the Chambers of Death.* Next to this first Rank of Sinners, who please Men by being their Tutors and Directors in Vice, are those complaisant Persons, who tho' they do not plainly and expressly invite Men to be wicked, yet countenance them in their Vice, and encourage them to continue in it, by Flattery or Connivance. They know how unable Vice is to sustain it self under Disgrace; and how glad a Vicious Man is, when his Sins, of which He himself is naturally asham'd, are kept in countenance by Those with whom he converses. These Courteous Men therefore, are careful strictly to watch all their Words, lest any should escape them, which might

might betray the least Dislike of what those Persons do, whose Ruin they had rather see, than feel their Displeasure. If by opposing themselves to the licentious Practices of a daring Sinner, they should chance to offend him, some small temporal Interest of their Own might be in danger; which, because it is their Own, they do not think worth hazarding, to purchase the eternal Salvation of Another. If their deluded Friend should be so hardy, as to walk upon a Precipice, they are more complaisant than to spoil a Frolick, tho' the next step may be into the Depths of Hell. Over Men of such sordid Spirits, Sinners have as great a Power, as they have over their own Consciences: When Ungodly Men have once prevail'd with their Consciences not to accuse them, these Flatterers soon take the Hint, and presently stop their Mouths; and both together suffer the habitual Sinner to go on quietly to Perdition: For such Men think it sufficient, that Their Charity to the Soul of their Brother, should keep pace with his Love to Himself: And if it is his Pleasure to sacrifice his Soul to his Lusts, He disposeth of what is his Own; and they will not be so impertinently rude, as to intermeddle in the Concerns of another. They find it is his Humour to live without Controul, and they know how to make their Court better than to attempt to save a Man against his Will. This sordid Compliance with the Wicked, for fear of displeasing them, as it is a Sign of a Base and Servile Spirit, wherever it is met; so is it attended with greater Degrees of Guilt and Scandal in those, whose peculiar Office it is boldly to rebuke Sin, and to shew the People their Transgressions. God hath denounc'd very severe Woes

against those Seers, who shut their Eyes, and will not see; who speak smooth things, and prophesy Deceit; who sow Pillows under the Arms of Sinners, that they may sleep on securely, and take their Ease. Should the Ministers of the Gospel suit their Doctrines, not to the Edification, but to the Palates of their Hearers; should they, who are allowed of God to be put in trust with the Gospel, even so speak, *not as pleasing God, which trieth our Hearts, but as pleasing Men*; should they handle the Word of God deceitfully, not *by Manifestation of the Truth, commending themselves to every Man's Conscience*, but Diffimulation of the Truth, commending themselves to some Mens Favour; should they, in order to compliment Sinners of Distinction and Rank, represent the Way which leadeth unto Life, as much Broader, and the Gate which entreth into Heaven, as a great deal Wider, than Christ in the Gospel hath taught Us they are; should they take more care to advance Pleasing Errors, than to preach Useful Truths; should they Alter, should they Disguise, should they Stifle any fundamental Points, either of the Christian Faith, or of the Christian Practice, which they had formerly inculcated with Zeal and Earnestness, not because they judged such Points to be less True, less Necessary, or less Seasonable, but meerly because they found them to be less Taking, less Popular, and less Fashionable, than they had been; should, I say, the Stewards of the Mysteries of God be at any time thus Unfaithful, they would probably incur the Displeasure even of those very Men, whom by so Scandalous a Conduct they sought to please; they would certainly

expose themselves to the just Censures of all Wise and Good Men, and to the utmost Indignation of an Offended God. Should we thus *depart out of the Way*, should we *cause many to stumble at thy Law*, should we *corrupt the Covenant of God*, it would be just in God to make us *Contemptible and Base before all the People*, according as we have not kept his Ways, but have been partial in his Law. But were we sure to please Men, by such base Compliances, yet should we deserve ill of those, whom by thus pleasing we expos'd to Ruin. Better are the keenest Reproofs of an Open Enemy, then the fatal Endearments of those false Friends, who whilst they flatter Men into Damnation, and betray those to whom they make their Court, have no other Title than Judas had, to be numbred amongst the faithful Servants of Jesus Christ. But,

2dly, As we may not please Men, by doing any thing which is destructive to their Salvation; so neither may we please them, by doing any thing which may endanger Our Own. Charity to my Brother, Obliges me rather to incur his Displeasure than to contribute to his Ruin; and Charity to my Own Soul, will make me rather venture to displease Man than God. It is not lawful for any Man to make His Pleasure the Rule of his Own Actions; much less Ought another to make His Will the measure of Mine: He, who expects that I should comply with Him, is himself bound up by the same Laws as I am: We are Both limited by the Laws of God, and it can be no Excuse to either of Us, that We seek to gratify our Fellow-Servant, by transgressing the Commands of our common Lord

and Master. When at any time we consult the Pleasure, and comply with the Desires of each other, it is not so properly Men whom we desire to please, as God, who hath commanded us in some things to please Men: And to shew that it is not the Pleasure of Man, which governs us any otherwise than in subordination to God's, when the Will of our Fellow-Creatures runs counter to the Commandments of God our Creator, we ought no longer to shew ourselves Obsequious and Complaisant. Whatever Motives can be urg'd for our Compliance in any thing which is sinful, will betray the Cause which they are brought for, and plead much stronger for a peremptory Refusal. If to work upon our Gratitude Past Favours are pretended, why we should not stand out, the Mercies we have received from God are infinitely Greater, the Obligations to him Earlier, and the Ties by which we are bound to him much Stronger. If those who would have us do their Pleasure, address themselves to our Hopes, by shewing that it is our Interest to humour them, or would prevail upon our Fears, by representing to us the ill Consequences of disobliging them, yet Heaven hath greater Rewards in store than they can Promise, much more than they can make Good; and Hell hath greater Plagues in reserve than they can Threaten, much more than they can Inflict. If we chuse to offend Them, rather than disobey God, we have just Reason to hope, that His Providence will shelter us from any ill Effects of their Displeasure: But if to please them, we Offend God, their Power is unable to secure us From, or to support us under his Displeasure. His Anger is Unavoidable,

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so that there is no flying from it : His Vengeance is Insupportable, so that there is no abiding under it. We may sometimes Incur the Displeasure of Men, for not conforming Our Practice to Theirs, but we can never Deserve it ; and this Testimony of Our own Conscience, that we suffer unjustly, will bear us up against their Frowns : But we can never displease God, but we must at the same time wound our Own Conscience, which will then be so far from supporting us under the Weight of God's Displeasure, that it will it self prove a Burden too great for Man to bear. From Men's Displeasure, be the Effects of it at present never so severe, there will in a short time be a final Release ; but the Divine Vengeance will pursue us out of This World into the next ; in the Grave we shall not find any Sanctuary against that Punishment, which will last as long as the Guilt which deserves it, the Soul which Suffers it, and God, who inflicts it. These Thoughts ought always to be present to our Minds, to deter us from seeking to please Men by any sinful Practices ; for no Temptation which Satan useth, turns better to his Account, or betrays more Souls into the Snares of Death, than his Fear of Displeasing Men ; It is not the Persecution of Tyrants only, that makes Men fall from their Duty, but every private Man hath that Awe over his Neighbour, as to Fright him into Sin : It is not only out of the Fear of Death, or Banishment, or Poverty, or any Evils of the first Magnitude, that we transgress the Laws of God ; but the Fear of an angry Word, an unkind Look, a cool Indifference towards us, shall make us comply with what we know to be Sinful and Damnable.

Nor doth this Fear work only upon Base and Cowardly Spirits, but upon those also that have the Reputation of the most Brave. He that can undauntedly mount a Breach, and advance to the Mouth of a Cannon, yet hath not Courage enough to be sober amongst the Intemperate, or to refuse a Challenge. Nay, those very Persons who have not been afraid at the Frowns of a Prince, but have been content to lose all they had, rather than to abjure their Religion at his Command, yet have been known to live in direct Opposition to it, rather than by being singular to disoblige those with whom they have conversed. This Compliance with sinful Practices, in order to please Sinners, borroweth the Disguise of several good Qualities, and puts on very plausible Names. When the *Romanist* would have us believe, as the Church believes, he calls this Compliance Catholic-Communion; When one who gives himself a Latitude in Living, would prevail with us to do as he doth, he calls this Good Nature: To fall in with all the modish Vices of the Age, is styl'd Good Breeding; And those who would perswade Others to run into the same Excess of Riot, as they allow themselves in, term this Good Fellowship. That Indifference to All Religions, and All Communions, which is deservedly Odious, when it is call'd by its own true Name of Luke-warmness, must be recommended under the more specious Title of Temper and Moderation; And that Atheism and Infidelity, which would fright People from being Profelytes thereto, if they were directly propos'd as such, must, in order to gain Converts, borrow the gentler Appellation of Free-thinking,

ing, and divesting Ourselves of the Prejudices of Education. The more frequent this vicious Compliance is, and the more specious Appearances it carries, the more we ought to be upon our guard against it, as knowing it is too great a strain of Complaisance to commit Sin, rather than to do what they call a Rude Thing. And we carry the Compliment too far, when we please Men at the Expence of our own Everlasting Salvation.

But tho' we ought not to please Men by doing any thing which may endanger Their Souls, or our Own, yet there are Other Cases, wherein it is not only Lawful, but our Bounden Duty to please Men, since in these the pleasing of Men is one part of that Duty, which we owe to our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. For,

III. What Men Ought to be pleas'd with, That we Ought to do, that Men may be pleas'd therewith.

Since God's Will is the Rule of Man's, whatever Actions are agreeable to the Laws of God, Ought to be pleasing to Men; and as Men ought to be Pleas'd, when God's Name is Glorified by the Performance of his Will, so ought they to promote the Pleasure of each other, by the mutual Observance of His Commandments. Good Men are justly pleas'd, when the Laws of God are kept, and his Name is honour'd. This Pleasure they have a good Right and Title to; and that they may have frequent Opportunities of exercising it, *Our Light Ought so to shine before these righteous Persons, that seeing these our good Works, they may be pleas'd, and glorify our Father which is in Heaven.* I do not say, that we ought

to perform Good Actions only that we may please Men ; for if they be done barely for this end, they commence Bad Actions ; and such as good Men, if they are aware that they proceed from this bad Principle, ought not to be pleas'd with. But since God hath annext Praise and Esteem to Vertuous Actions, which, as they are pleasing to Him, so they procure us also the Good Will of men ; such Actions as these, are not Less, but more our Duty, for being Amiable and Pleasing. *Whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, if there be any Vertue, any Praise, our Apostle, commands us to think on such things.* We are not to think of these only, because they procure us Love, Reputation, and Praise ; but because being Just, Pure, and Vertuous, they are such as ought to be Belov'd, Esteem'd, and Prais'd. This Love, Esteem, and Praise, were they separated from Justice, Purity, and Vertue, ought not to be aim'd at by us. But since the pleasing of men naturally arises from our Performance of such laudable Actions, we must, by the doing these, contribute to the Pleasure of godly men. This Rule will not only Warrant us, but Oblige us to please good men, by keeping all the Laws of God. And because all men, whether they are or not, yet Ought to be pleas'd with what tends to the Honour of Religion, to the Good of men's Souls, and to the Publick Peace, it will be our Duty to endeavour the pleasing of men, in order to promote these great Ends. And,

1st. We must please men, that we may thereby promote the Honour of our Religion. Some men mistake Ill-nature for a certain Sign of Grace,

Grace, and think they are not such as they ought to be, unless in every thing they are Singular. To Hate the World, and to be Hated by it, is, in their Opinion, the Duty and Lot of all Christ's Disciples, and they are apt to suspect themselves, if Others think well of them, or are Pleas'd with any thing they do. Hence, in the whole Conduct of their Lives, they take a great Delight to thwart and to cross others. By a rude and churlish Behaviour, they declare an open Defiance to mankind, and think they can never please God, but by displeasing men. This sour and rugged Temper of some men, who pretend to be good Christians, purely because they are not like other men, and who exclude all such from being Religious, who are not like themselves, brings a great Scandal on that Faith which they profess, and by this malignancy of Spirit disparage. For sweetness of Nature, and an obliging Deportment, have a good Title to, and are in present Possession of, a very fair Reputation in all civiliz'd parts of the World; so that Religion must needs suffer much in the Opinions of men, if it should be thought to countenance Ill-nature and Ill-breeding. Courteousness and Affability, Meekness and Defe-
 rence to others, have had a Place amongst moral Vertues, in all the Schemes of Duty that have yet appear'd in the World. And it would be a great Reproach on the Gospel, to suppose that we must put off all Humanity, before we can commence good Christians. There are indeed several things, wherein it is Unlawful for us to comply with the Customs of the World; but the more we are bound up in These Cases, the more cautious we ought to be in Other things not to
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be Stiff and Humorsome. If in some things we are forc'd to be Singular, because our Holy Religion will not permit Us to do as Others do; the best way to convince Mankind, that this proceeds not from Frowardness, and that we do not take delight to oppose others, will be by shewing a ready Compliance, and a sincere Desire to please, where we have a greater Scope, and where the Laws of God are so far from Forbidding us, that they Oblige us to comply. This Endeavour to please Men, will free our Religion from the Scandal of sowing Men's Tempers, of rendring them Morose and Unsociable, Sullen and Preverse, Ill-natur'd and Untractable, which are Qualities of so Odious a Character, that a Religion which should seem to inspire them, would be thought very improper for Persons of Good Nature, and Ingenious Education; that is, for the very best part of Mankind to be govern'd by. And as we ought thus to please Men, in order to vindicate the Honor of our Religion, so

2dly, We ought to please Men, in order to promote the Spiritual Good of their Souls.

When our Apostle lays down this general Precept, *Let every one please his Neighbour*, he immediately subjoins to what End this Pleasing of our Neighbour ought to be directed, i. e. *For his Good to Edification*. This, as it is the End which He recommends to Others to pursue, so was it the Scope to which his Own Endeavours to please, were constantly directed. *I please Men*; saith he, *in all things, not seeking mine Own Profit, but the Profit of many, that they might be saved*. This was the Reason of his Easy Compliance, and adapting himself to the several Tem-

Tempers and Humours of those he conversed with: If he was a *Servant unto all Men*, it was that he might gain the more: *Unto the Jews he became as a Jew*, that he might gain the Jew: *To them that were Under the Law, as under the Law*, that he might gain them under the Law: *To them that were without Law, as without Law*, that he might gain them that were without Law; *To the Weak, he became as Weak*, that he might gain the Weak; And was made *All Things, to All Men*, that he might by all Means save some. For our Apostle, who was perfectly well skill'd in all the Arts of Divine Oratory, understood very well how necessary it is, in order to convincing Men's Judgments, and influencing their Actions, to be first of all Master of their Affections. If we would have Men come in easily to our Opinions, and be govern'd by our Counsels, we must take care so to demean our selves, that they may be pleas'd with us, and have an Esteem for our Persons. It will be difficult to convince any, that we may have an earnest Zeal for the Good of their Souls, and a passionate Desire to promote their Eternal Welfare, if at the same time we do any thing which may justly offend and disquiet them, and make their present Condition Uneasy and Unpleasant. He who pretends to advise and direct another, challangeth some sort of Superiority over him; which the Pride that is natural to all Men, makes them very difficultly bear; It is necessary therefore that he should temper his Advice with a Mixture of Sweetness, and take care, that his Demeanour be such, as may prepare the Mind of his Disciple to submit more willingly to his Direction. Those Wholsome Instructions, which Charity requires us to give to our Brethren, are generally such,

as in their own Nature are not very grateful and Pleasing to the depraved Appetites of men. To make them therefore the more Acceptable; and that they may be the better Relish'd, they must be set off with an Air of Pleasantness; and what of it self is Distastful, must have its Bitterness dissembled, that it may be the easier taken down, and convey Health to the distemper'd Soul. Hence the Wisdom of the Ancients thought it proper to couch the severe Precepts of morality under the Pleasantness of Fable; they cloath'd their Notions of Philosophy and the sober Dictates of right Reason, in the gaiest Dress that Poetry could furnish; and took care to please the Fancies of their Hearers, that by these means they might insinuate themselves into their good Esteem; and by Pleasing, might profit them. And our Saviour, in condescension to the Infirmit-
 ties of men, hath vouchsafed to Use, and by his Using hath Sanctified this method of Instruction. He hath deliver'd the Doctrines of the Gospel in the delightful Style of Parables, which in their first and literal meaning are fitted to Entertain and to Divert the Hearer, and so to prepare his mind for the Reception of those Practical Truths, which are conceal'd Under them, and convey'd By them. Now since Christian Charity obligeth us to seek the spiritual Good of others, and Experience sheweth us, how naturally Esteem or Disesteem, Approbation or Dislike, pass from Persons to Doctrines, that our Endeavours to promote the Spiritual Welfare of our Brethren may have the better Effect, we Ought to study the Pleasing those, whom without Pleasing we cannot Profit; to this end our Apostle made it his utmost care to please men, and by thus
 pleasing

pleasing them, did the Office of an Apostle or Servant of Jesus Christ. And as the Private Interest of our Neighbour is a good End of endeavouring to please, so

3dly, We must endeavour to Please Others, in order to promote the Publick Peace. We are commanded to *follow Peace with all Men*; and because there are some proper Means of attaining this End, we are also Oblig'd to *follow after the things which make for Peace*. All those Words and Actions, which have any Influence towards the establishing an amicable Correspondence amongst our Fellow-Christians, are, by Virtue of this Precept, matter of Strict Duty; and all, which have the least Tendency to disquiet the Minds of our Brethren, are, by force of the same Precept, Utterly Unlawful. Now if we closely observe the Origine of all Quarrels, we shall find, that they arise from the Displeasure we conceive one against another. We may perceive by Our selves, how nicely tender Self-love is; how desirous we are, that every one should do what We like; and how we are presently upon the Alarm, if any one betrays the least Slight of us, by doing what is Displeasing to us: We may be sure this Self-love is planted as Deeply, and works as Strongly in other Men, as in Us: They are as much addicted to their own Humours, as we are to Ours; and love as little to be thwarted in them as We do: If therefore we are sensible how quick and severe our Own Resentments are, when any thing is done which offends us, if we would not awaken the same Resentments in Others, we must be careful not to do any thing which may justly displease them. We all naturally desire to be pleas'd, but if each should constantly follow his own Humor, we shall mutually interfere one with another. The best way to provide for our Own Satisfaction, and the publick Peace, will be to gratify Each Other; to procure the Courtesy of Others, by complaisance towards Them, and by a mutual Commerce of the Offices of Humanity to keep up that good Order, which, upon the least Failure of these Duties, is presently disturb'd. That Inward Peace which consists in Unity of Mind, and Agreement of Judgment, is rather to be Wish'd, than Hop'd for, in

a perverse Generation: But even then, when we cannot come up to this happy State, we may preserve that Outward Quiet, which consists in the reciprocal Discharge of all the Duties of Civility. This tender Care how we displease others, as it procures Their good Will to Us, so it keeps alive Ours to Them: For since it is difficult to have a Warmth for any, in whom we perceive a Coolness towards Us, the same Actions of Ours, which create an Averseness in Them, will by degrees extinguish in Our Minds that Charity, which Ought always to be active in us towards our Christian Brethren. The reconciling of Differences, when they are come to full growth, and the restoring of Peace, where it hath been long broken, are attended with so many Difficulties, that they seldom prove successful. It will be much easier by pleasing each other, to suppress this Evil in its First Rise, to prevent its Birth, and to hinder its Conception. *The beginning of Strife, is as the letting out of Water,* which, having once past its Banks, spreads itself to a vast Extent; but might, by a moderate Care at first, have been kept within its due Compass. Now since all those Quarrels, which disturb that mutual Concord that ought to be amongst all Christians, have their First Rise from some Misunderstandings betwixt them; since these arise from our disobliging each Other by Words or Actions not pleasing; to prevent these Mischiefs, and to preserve that Brotherly Love, which is the peculiar Duty and Character of Christians, we are oblig'd to endeavour the Pleasing of each Other. Glory to God, Peace on Earth, and Good-will towards Men, are the great Ends of the Gospel: Since therefore by pleasing Men, we may promote the Honour of Our Religion, the Publick Peace, and the Salvation of each other, to please Men, in order to these good Ends, is to acquit our selves faithful Servants of Jesus Christ.

But tho' in these things we ought to please Men, yet we must rest here: The pleasing of Men must not be the Chief Reason and Ultimate End even of our Good Actions. For he who is govern'd by no better a Principle than this, acts by a very Unsteady, Insufficient, Dangerous, and False Rule. Those

Those Actions can never be Uniform, which are directed by a Rule capable of Change: So that there must necessarily be a great deal of Uncertainty and Variety in that Man's Actions, who adapts all he doth to the Pleasing of Men. For what Some Men are pleas'd with, will be displeasing to Others; and here he will be at a loss, how to determine himself, since the Danger of Disappointment is equal to the Hopes of Success. Nay, so inconstant are the Minds of Men; so mutable their Interests, and with them their Inclinations, that the Same Actions, do not always please the Same Man: So that were we to govern our Lives according to any one Man's Pleasure, we should never be able by any Art to hit that Mark, which constantly wavers.

But were this Rule of Acting more Fix'd than it is, yet still it would prove Insufficient: For there are several Degrees and Instances of Duty, to which it would not extend. Actions in themselves very Faulty, and which want many of those Circumstances which are necessary to make them truly Good, may yet by a fair Out-side chance to please Men; so that such a Principle of Acting, would rather Minister to Ostentation, than make us sincerely Vertuous. There are many Actions, which we are strictly bound to, which in some Times and Circumstances may not be pleasing to those, whose esteem of us we most value: And such as these we shall very unwillingly venture on, if our utmost Aim in doing well, is to please Men. There are moreover several Acts of Charity and Devotion to be done in Private, and those Men cannot be pleased with, because they are industriously hidden from them; which therefore are in great danger of being omitted by those, who look not beyond the Esteem of Men.

Nor is this only an Inexpedient and Defective, but also a Dangerous and Unsafe Rule. If an Endeavour to please Men, is the main Spring of our Motion towards Good; if their Love and Esteem, their Applause and Approbation, seem to us Blessings of that Importance, that we cannot be Easy or Happy without them, and therefore incite us strongly to the Performance of those

those Good Actions, by which they are sometimes to be attain'd ; we are in great danger of being tempted to Evil also, when the Pleasure of Men, of which we are so fond, is no otherways to be procur'd. For he who performs Good Actions only to please Men, doth not choose these, as they are Vertuous, but as they are Pleasing and Agreeable; so that if Evil Actions shall appear to tend equally, or more, to the End he aims at, he will be by this Principle equally or more inclin'd to those. But tho' this wrong Bias on the Soul should not carry it so far as to comply with what is Confessedly and Notoriously Evil, yet it will make us apt to entertain a favourable Opinion of all Actions, which Minister to an End we so eagerly pursue: It will make us at first With them lawful, and at last by easy Degrees, we shall pass on to Esteem them such.

But after all, the chief and true Reason why we should not make the Praise of Men the Rule of our Actions, is, because it is a False one. It is not that Rule by which we ought to Live, because it is not that by which we shall be finally Judged. God hath not only requir'd, that we should perform such and such pre-scrib'd Actions, but that we should do them out of a true Sense of our Duty to Him, and entire Regard to his Law. At the last Day, when our few Good Actions shall be set against our numberless Sins, those which were done barely to please Men, shall not come into Account with the Former. Actions done to please Men only, can expect no Reward but from Men: But if the Pleasing of God be the Scope of all our Actions, we have a fair Prospect of a Reward from the Hands of God. Let us therefore in all things act, not as Men-pleasers, but as the Servants of Christ, doing the Will of God from the Heart, with Good-Will doing Service as to the Lord, and not to Men; knowing that whatsoever good thing any Man doth, upon this good Principle, the same he shall receive of the Lord, in the great Day of Retribution.

F I N I S.



